

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG PROGRAMS

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UCLA STUDY REINFORCES THE NEED FOR PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO PROPOSITION 36

SACRAMENTO - State officials announced additional proposed program reforms for Proposition 36 following a study by UCLA researchers. Proposition 36 offers drug treatment rather than incarceration for non-violent drug offenders and was approved by California voters in 2000.

The UCLA Cost Benefit Analysis found that there is significant cost savings with Proposition 36, and the highest cost savings are realized when offenders successfully complete treatment. The state saved more than \$2 for every \$1 on all Proposition 36 offenders and saved \$4 on offenders that successfully completed treatment.

The report also found that 1.6 percent of Proposition 36 offenders are responsible for a disproportionate share of the program's criminal justice costs. Their costs were more than \$21,000 per person versus more than \$2,200 for the typical offender – 10 times the cost of the typical Proposition 36 offender. These offenders had five or more convictions in a 30-month period prior to their Proposition 36 eligible offense and were the most likely to re-offend.

"The cost benefit report underscores the need for reforms that the Governor proposed in his January budget," said Kathryn Jett, director of the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs, the agency overseeing the program. "The Department will be working with stakeholders to develop recommendations to address the issues around these high-cost offenders. A change in eligibility would allow counties to focus resources on individuals most likely to benefit from treatment."

The UCLA report also recommends that incentives should be considered for counties that demonstrate success in treatment, retention and completion. Proposition 36 participants who complete treatment are less likely to re-offend and are more likely to remain drug-free and employed, yet treatment completion rates vary significantly from county to county. With performance-based funding, counties are encouraged to adopt best practices and program improvements.

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Proposition 36 funding is scheduled to end on June 30. The Governor's budget proposes maintaining the General Fund transfer to the Substance Abuse Treatment Fund at \$120 million on a one-time basis for 2006-07 conditioned upon the Legislature passing reforms to the program to increase accountability and improve outcomes. The reforms include:

- Court authority to impose jail sanctions (i.e., flash incarceration).
- Mandated drug testing.
- Increased judicial monitoring.
- Delivery of culturally competent treatment services.
- Tailored treatment based upon the client's assessed need.

More than 135,000 individuals have entered the Proposition 36 program. Researchers have consistently found that half are entering treatment for the first time, half used their primary drug for more than 10 years and most are addicted to methamphetamine. Completion rates of 34 percent are comparable with other drug diversion programs. A full copy of the UCLA Cost Benefit Analysis can be found at www.npi.ucla.edu.

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